



The Jewish

# Gaily Forward

Tamuz + Av + Elul 5775 ■ July + August 2015

## Welcome Rabbi Ted Riter!

BY ALEX INGERSOLL

**R**abbi Ted Riter will be joining Congregation Sha'ar Zahav as our interim rabbi starting in July.

Rabbi Riter (pronounced "writer") comes to us from Beth Israel Congregation in Jackson,

Mississippi, where he has been serving as interim rabbi during this past year. He previously served as senior rabbi at Temple Adat Elohim in Thousand Oaks and before that as associate rabbi at Temple Solel in Cardiff by the Sea. His education includes ordination from Hebrew

Union College–Cincinnati in 1997 and studies in Mus-sar, in spiritual direction (with the Renewal movement), and in non-profit management.

Several years ago, the Union for Reform Judaism recognized the need for rabbis to be trained to manage transitions following the departure of a long-term rabbi. An interim rabbi helps a congregation and staff adjust to the change, and plan for the next steps. They generally serve a congregation for one or two years and are not in the running to stay on as the congregation's next "settled" rabbi. At Sha'ar Zahav, we have had rabbis serve as interim clergy; this will be the first time, however, that a graduate of this "intentional interim rabbi" program will serve in this role.

The search committee (co-chairs Alex Ingersoll and Rose Katz, Daniel Chesir, Alice Harron, Paul Peninger, Julia Weber) was very pleased by the response to our listing for an interim rabbi. We received ten resumes and, based upon education, experience and responses to our questions about why they chose to do interim work and why they were interested in serving CSZ in particular, we selected four candidates for phone interviews. We narrowed the field again and began checking formal (and informal) references.



Following Rabbi Riter's in-person visit to Sha'ar Zahav in May, the search committee unanimously decided our search was over, and we forwarded our enthusiastic recommendation to President Laura Lowe and the Va'ad. On May 20th, the Va'ad unanimously approved Rabbi Riter's appointment as interim rabbi with CSZ. At that meeting, we were pleased to report that the many congregants who met Rabbi Riter during his visit were uniformly impressed by his warmth, manner and knowledge – and that he asked really good questions! His term will be one year, with an option for a second year.

Rabbi Riter says, "I am thrilled to join the Sha'ar Zahav community as interim rabbi in July. My focus over the past ten years has been on creating 'intentional' Jewish living, both individually and communally. I've always looked at CSZ as a model of an intentional synagogue and I am therefore so honored and humbled to help lead you through this transition year as you re-examine your congregational identity and lay the groundwork for your future rabbinic leadership."

Rabbi Riter also looks forward to spending more time with his six-year-old daughter, Orli, who lives on the Peninsula.



# Regina Wurst Retires



BY ANNYE BONE

**R**egina Wurst, our administrator since December, 2006, has announced that she is retiring and will be leaving us in August.

When Regina first arrived at Sha'ar Zahav, we hadn't had an administrator for several months and so Regina faced the challenge of getting "everything organized, up to par and running smoothly." Since then, she's been working full-time to ensure that our congregation runs efficiently. She will certainly be missed.

Regina's favorite experience at Sha'ar Zahav has been interacting with our members. She says that thanks to the congregation she

has a better understanding of what the letters in LGBTQ mean, and feels honored to have been able to contribute in a small way to the struggle for full inclusion for all in our congregation and society. It has been an honor for her to be able to share in members lives, and be of service to the community.

**Administrative Assistant Carrie Kwong (l) and outgoing Administrator Regina Wurst**

She feels that the key to Sha'ar Zahav thriving in the future is to be involved in the community and to network more closely with other neighborhood organizations. The faith communities in the

immediate area of Dolores and 16th streets are organizing with the help of the Interfaith Council and this holds great promise for advancing the tikkun olam work of Sha'ar Zahav.

Regina says it's very hard to leave, but she is looking forward to having time for her family – specifically her grandchildren, Elijah, Jeremiah and Chaya, who have always lived with her. (She has a fourth grandson, Samuel, who lives in the Philippines.) She has been working full-time and helping her daughter take care of the children. It's been a lot of work and Regina is looking forward to just concentrating on her family.

Please join our community in saying goodbye to Regina and wishing her well at Kabbalat Shabbat services on Friday, July 24.

## Special Shabbatot Coming to a Bimah Near You

BY LARRY WEXLER, RITUAL COMMITTEE CHAIR

There are some special Shabbatot coming up in July. On Friday, July 10, Congregation Sha'ar Zahav will be marking our 38th year with a low-key anniversary service led by our founding member, Daniel Chesir, using some of our very early liturgy.

The following Friday night, July 17, we will formally welcome our interim rabbi, Rabbi Ted Riter, to our bimah. Rabbi Riter, along with his co-leader Karen Schiller, will then have the honor and pleasure of conducting the installation service for our incoming Va'ad members and officers during the course of our Kabbalat Shabbat service.

And to add a touch of sweet sadness to the month, at serv-

ices the next Friday night, July 24, we will say good-bye to our wonderful and long-serving administrator, Regina Wurst (see above). For all that Regina has done for the congregation, we on the Ritual Committee have been among the most fortunate beneficiaries of her love and labors. We will miss her greatly.

The following night, Saturday, July 25, is Tisha B'Av, the somber holiday commemorating the destruction of the Temple in ancient times. Please look for information about our observance and services in the weekly email.

We look forward to welcoming you at these special July services, as well as to all our services throughout the year.

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Congregation Sha'ar Zahav is a member of the Union for Reform Judaism, the World Congress of Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Jews, and the San Francisco Organizing Project



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**VICE PRESIDENTS** Michael Chertok

Nancy Levin

Mark Pressler

**RECORDER** Marc Lipschutz

**TREASURER** Tiela Chalmers

### Va'ad Members

Larry Best, Alice Harron, Tom Lakritz, Eve M., Michael Rice, Martin Tannenbaum, Larry Wexler, Andy Williamson, Judith Wolfe, James Carlson (Immediate Past President)



# Seeking Excellence



**SERVING AS** president of a congregation might be compared to being CEO of a corporation, but there are significant differences. While in each the board might meet monthly, in a corporation, the stockholders usually only meet annually, but in a synagogue the feedback is daily. And this was true, even before the internet!

I accepted the responsibility of president last July, appreciating, after years of service on the Va'ad and committees, that the work would sometimes be all consuming. It has been that and so much more. I have benefited from all the teamwork of our lay leaders in taking on tasks, small and large.

Our community has embarked on an exploration of who we are as a holy congregation. This work, supported by the staff of LightBox Collaborative, is enabling us to identify our unique qualities. How are we serving our members and how do we want to be seen by prospective members and the rest of the Jewish community? Many of our members have expressed concern about the average age of our membership. I believe that younger folks will join us if we are a community that offers meaningful spirituality and value.

The population studies of the Bay Area Jewish community have indicated a very low rate of membership in synagogues, but a higher level of identification as Jews. Our unique community has been a spiritual home for hundreds of people during the past 38 years, and it is now our mission to reimagine the ways in which we can be that home for hundreds more in the future. Our strengths were amply demonstrated at the recent annual meeting where our accomplishments were lauded. We are very fortunate that our members are generous with their time and money; our members are our greatest assets.

We are trailblazers. We fought for and achieved the acceptance of LGBT people in the Bay Area and throughout the Jewish world. Our bimah has been graced by the sermons of rabbis from most of the branches of Judaism.

So, as we find ourselves in a year of reflection and transition, I am optimistic that we will once again find the inspiration and creativity for greatness as a holy community. We will

find new ways to teach Torah to young and old, to welcome the stranger, to do the work of tikkun olam in our neighborhood and to make manifest the Divine spark in each of us.

Our path to this new reality will be supported by our highly regarded interim rabbi, Ted Riter, and our continuing professionals: Cantor Sharon Bernstein and Director of Children's and Family Education Rebecca Weiner. This team, along with our lay leadership, will be seeking your feedback and participation throughout the year. I am excited about the possibilities and thank all the new Va'ad members for stepping up to leadership.

When we call on you, please say yes. Our success as a congregation is built on the commitment that each of us makes to seek excellence.

Enjoy your summer vacations and I look forward to greeting you at a Kabbalat Shabbat service or our more intimate Saturday morning minyan.

## Welcome to new members

Jeffrey Auman  
Sarah Wysocki

## Mazel tov to

Lilah Segal-Angel on her bat mitzvah.  
Quinn Klaiman on his bar mitzvah.  
Asa DiGirolamo Klein on his bar mitzvah.  
Allan Gold who was presented with a "Service to the Community" Award by the Rotary Club of Tiburon-Belvedere, in honor of his "Energizer Bunny energy, passion for helping all, and his heart of Gold."

## Task Force Leaders

**MEMBERSHIP** Alice Harron and Nancy Levin  
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# Art as Spiritual Practice

BY TAMARA LITTLE

Some of you are aware that a few months ago, I converted to Judaism. It has been one of the best decisions I've ever made, and one of my proudest achievements. I could not be happier in my choice to become one of the Jewish people, and to belong to this synagogue. I have enjoyed meeting many of you, and look forward to meeting many new friends.

I realize this journey is lifelong, and my conversion was merely the beginning. I am excited to continue to discover what being Jewish means, and the many ways to express this unique identity.

One of the ways, making art, is something I am especially excited about. As an artist and spiritual person, I can think of nothing more meaningful than combining these two elements to honor God. Spirituality is so personal, and spiritual identity is unique to each person. Art is also highly personal. Every person's expression of these elements is unique, whether they consider themselves an artist or not.

Art brings people together, as does spirituality. It is a powerful tool that can accomplish more than words alone, as it transcends language barriers and touches deep within to our inner spirit. When words fail to fully express our feelings, a



painting or drawing (or any work of art) can capture so much more. You don't have to be a skilled artist. A belief in your God-given right to self-expression is the only requirement.

When I am creating art, it is a deeply moving, almost medita-

tive experience. This is when I feel I am closest to God, as it is my most favorite thing in the world to do. It is so freeing. My wish is that as many people can have this experience as possible. I plan to honor this gift that God has given me by giving back to the Jewish tradition that has given me so much.

## Our Annual Meeting

BY MARC LIPSCHUTZ

On May 27, at Sha'ar Zahav's Annual Meeting, Sha'ar Zahav congregants, Va'ad members, and staff joined together to celebrate our past year and hear about our future.

President Laura Lowe recapped highlights of the previous year, including our return to fiscal health. Rabbi Camille Shira Angel thanked us for fifteen wonderful years and received a standing ovation. Karen Schiller presented the results of our work with LightBox Collaborative. Irene Ogus urged us to create a building maintenance reserve fund, perhaps through our endowment. Alex Ingersoll and Rose Katz announced that the Va'ad approved hiring Rabbi Ted Riter as our interim rabbi (see page 1).

As usual, we thanked outgoing Va'ad members and elected new ones. Laura Lowe will continue as president and Michael Chertok was elected to serve as first vice president. Mark Pressler was thanked for his service as treasurer and he and Nancy Levin were both elected to serve as vice presidents.

Tiela Chalmers was elected to serve as treasurer and I was elected recorder. Tom Lakritz will serve a one-year term as a member at large, Larry Wexler will serve two years, and Larry Best, Michael Rice and Andy Williamson will serve for three years. Martin Tannenbaum, Judith Wolfe, Alice Harron and Eve Meyer are continuing on the Va'ad. Outgoing vice presidents Beth Ross and Erika Katske, recorder Ann Bauman, and at-large members Patty Caplan, Ron Lezell and Andrew Ramer were thanked for their service.

An amendment to the bylaws concerning membership eligibility was tabled for further discussion and will be voted on within the next few months. Mark Pressler thanked us for generously surpassing our Rainbow Campaign fundraising goal and presented a conservative 2015-16 budget.

Regina Wurst, our administrator, was recognized for her years of outstanding, dedicated service, and Rabbi Angel, Cantor Bernstein, educator Rebecca Weiner and administrative assistant Carrie Kwong were also recognized for their work. Lauren Kim, Alan Michels and Sharyn Saslafsky were honored for their volunteer service.



# One-Stop Jewish Education



**THE LANDSCAPE** of Jewish education is changing. When I was young, families brought their children to religious school several times a week, but this is not the case anymore. Families, particularly in urban settings, find it harder and harder to

bring their children to school multiple times a week. Because of this shift, we have changed the landscape of what it means to give your child a thorough Jewish education.

In an article for the Council of American Jewish Educator's newsletter, Jill Eisen, Assistant Principal and Director of Outreach at Beth El Congregation in Baltimore, writes:

"In a time when families no longer live down the street from the synagogue, both parents work, public/private school has extended school time, and traffic has increased, parents have difficulty getting their children to religious school during the week. ... Hebrew school is just another time commitment to fit into the puzzle."

At Beit Sefer Phyllis Mintzer, we recognize the challenges that families often have getting their children to school, so we have changed the time we hold Hebrew school and, in the East Bay, we have brought the Hebrew school to our families, holding it at a local public school in Oakland. Next year we will have both Hebrew and religious school on Saturday. We

see these changes as ways to ensure that schedules and location do not derail a student's Hebrew education.

Our schedule for next year will be, on Saturdays at Sha'ar Zahav: Hebrew, 9-10 am; religious school, 10:30-noon; closing circle, noon-12:30. East Bay Hebrew is on Thursdays from 4-6 pm.

We are excited about our new program where students will eat Shabbos breakfast and learn Hebrew together. We feel our closing circle will be an opportunity to build more community engagement with a festive oneg after and, of course, with our favorite song leader, Nathaniel Marksmen.

In addition to our updated Saturday Hebrew program, we are excited to have our new interim rabbi engaged with Beit Sefer Phyllis Mintzer. Expect to see Rabbi Riter talking to a class, giving a drash in closing circle and meeting with the B'nei Mitzvah Chavurah.

One of the consistent lessons in the Torah is that change is a constant; it is how we respond to change that can make us a strong people and a successful tribe.

I am excited about the changes that are afoot for BSPM and I look forward to sharing more with you during the year.

Rebecca Weiner Educator

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**April 3-4**

Saturday kiddush sponsored by Lawrence Risman in honor of the namings of his great-niece and nephew, Ilana and Isaac Huang Risman-Jones.

**April 10-11**

The flowers and Saturday kiddush luncheon sponsored by the Klaiman and Donohue family in honor of Quinn's bar mitzvah.

**April 17-18**

Oneg sponsored by Donna Fein in memory of her husband, and Shelli's father, LeRoy Fein.

**April 24-25**

Flowers sponsored by Yo Schneeman in honor of Paul Cohen.  
The Scholar-in-Residence Access Shabbat oneg and kiddush sponsored by Gail Ludwig and Clarissa Kripke.

**May 1-2**

Flowers sponsored by Gerry Llamado in honor of Arthur Slepian who was presented with the "Israel in Our Hearts" award by the Jewish Community Federation.  
Oneg sponsored by Lori Schneeman in honor of Yo Schneeman's welcoming into the covenant.

**May 8-9**

Flowers sponsored by Alice Harron in memory of her father, Meyer J. Harron.  
Oneg sponsored by Gary Winter in memory of his father, Harry Winter.

**May 15-16**

Oneg sponsored by Ann Bauman & Kelly Theimann in honor of their 23rd wedding anniversary.  
Flowers & Saturday kiddush sponsored by the family of Asa DiGirolamo Klein in honor of his bar mitzvah.

**Our condolences to**

Howard Hahn on the loss of his father, Fred Hahn.

Hilary Zaid & Gil'i & Ro'e on the loss of their uncle and great-uncle, Martin Reiser.

Steve & Bob Nacamulli on the loss of their brother, David Nacamulli.

Helen Cohen on the loss of her cousin, Emily Caigan.

Yo Schneeman on the loss of her friend, Nancy Pittman.

Alan Ferrara on the loss of his aunt, Mary Pecorella.

Barbara Cymrot on the loss of her friend's son, Sean Edward Hornsby Finch.

Judy Huerta on the loss of her friend, Janet Gray.

Ron Edelman on the loss of his aunt, Lillian Finkelstein.

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Marc Lipschutz in honor of Lilah Segal Angel's bat mitzvah.  
Ora Prochovnick & Rena Frantz in memory of Irving Wecker.  
Flora Kupferman in honor of Rami Kripke-Ludwig's bar mitzvah.  
Ami Zusman in honor of Chava Novogrodsky-Godt, Rami Kripke-Ludwig, Lilah Segal Angel & Quinn Klaiman.  
Noelle Herrnberger  
Susan Tubbesing in memory of her uncle Harry Bezman.  
Allan Berenstein in memory of his mother Agnes Berenstein Schwartz, his grandfather  
Max Radetsky, and Marsha Nohl, Tom Razman, Jay Feinstein, Duff Kreitzberg & Mirtha Beal, & in honor of Regina Wurst for her dedicated service.  
Gerry Llamado in honor of Arthur Slepian winning the "Israel in our Hearts" award.  
Sharon & Jonah Jacobson  
James Carlson in memory of Giovanna Tuzzolino, Dorothy Cook & David Nacamulli, and in honor of Ruth Bernstein's milestone birthday, and Beth Ross and Laurie Trupin's final wedding.  
Ami Zusman  
Richard Meyerson in memory of Fred Hahn.  
Eve Meyer in honor of Lilah Segal Angel's bat mitzvah & in honor of co-leading the second night seder.  
Paul & Victoria Ehrlich  
Ron Lezell in memory of Sophie Lezell.  
Steve Elman & Tom Holt in memory of David Nacamulli, Dora Elman, Louis Elman, Judith Brooke Elman, Fred Hahn, Joseph Barth, Levi Seth Kahn, Batya Kalis, Robert Buchbinder, Donald Hughes & John Shealy Reiser, & in honor of Lilah Segal Angel's bat

mitzvah & Rabbi Camille Shira Angel, & in appreciation of Kathleen & Ernest Friedlander, Judith Wolfe & Sara Haber.

## Rainbow 2015

Bradley Neuberg  
Daniel Chesir in honor of Lilah Segal Angel's bat mitzvah.  
Elliott Sprehn in memory of his mother Leass'a Sprehn.  
Jim Frazin  
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Tova Green  
Leslie Miessner in honor of Rabbi Camille Shira Angel & Cantor Sharon Bernstein.

## Phyllis Mintzer Education Fund

Allan Berenstein in memory of David Nacamulli, brother of Steve & Florence Nacamulli & Bob & Lorraine Nacamulli.

## The Rabbi Julius & Pearl Funk Musical Events Fund

Jonathan Funk & John Arnold in memory of Dr. Seymour Levin.

## Pesach Seder

Marius Greenspan

## Cantor's Discretionary Fund

Paul Cohen  
James Carlson  
Marjorie Hilsenrad in honor of Rami Kripke-Ludwig's bar mitzvah.  
Janet Klein & Lisa DiGirolamo  
Allan Berenstein in memory of Judy Macks.

## Rabbi's Discretionary Fund

Stacy Shuster & Joan Lefkowitz in honor of Lilah Segal Angel's bat mitzvah.  
Howard Hahn in honor of Rabbi Angel.

## Bookplates

Allan Berenstein in memory of Bobby Mackey, Nanci Stern, Batya Kalis & in honor of Cantor Sharon Bernstein.  
Laura Lowe in honor of outgoing Va'ad members, Andrew Ramer, Ann Bauman, Patty Caplan, Ron Lezell & Beth Ross.



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# Congregation Sha'ar Zahav's High Holy Day Services



## 5776 High Holy Days with Congregation Sha'ar Zahav

Please join us again for the High Holy Days:

**Sunday, September 13**

**Monday, September 14**

**Tuesday, September 15**

**Tuesday, September 22**

**Wednesday, September 23**

**Erev Rosh Hashanah**

**Rosh Hashanah**

**Rosh Hashanah, 2nd day at CSZ**

**Erev Yom Kippur**

**Yom Kippur**

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